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PLAUTUS, TITUS M.

TITLE:

MENAECHMI

PLACE:

[NEW YORK]

DATE:

[1916]

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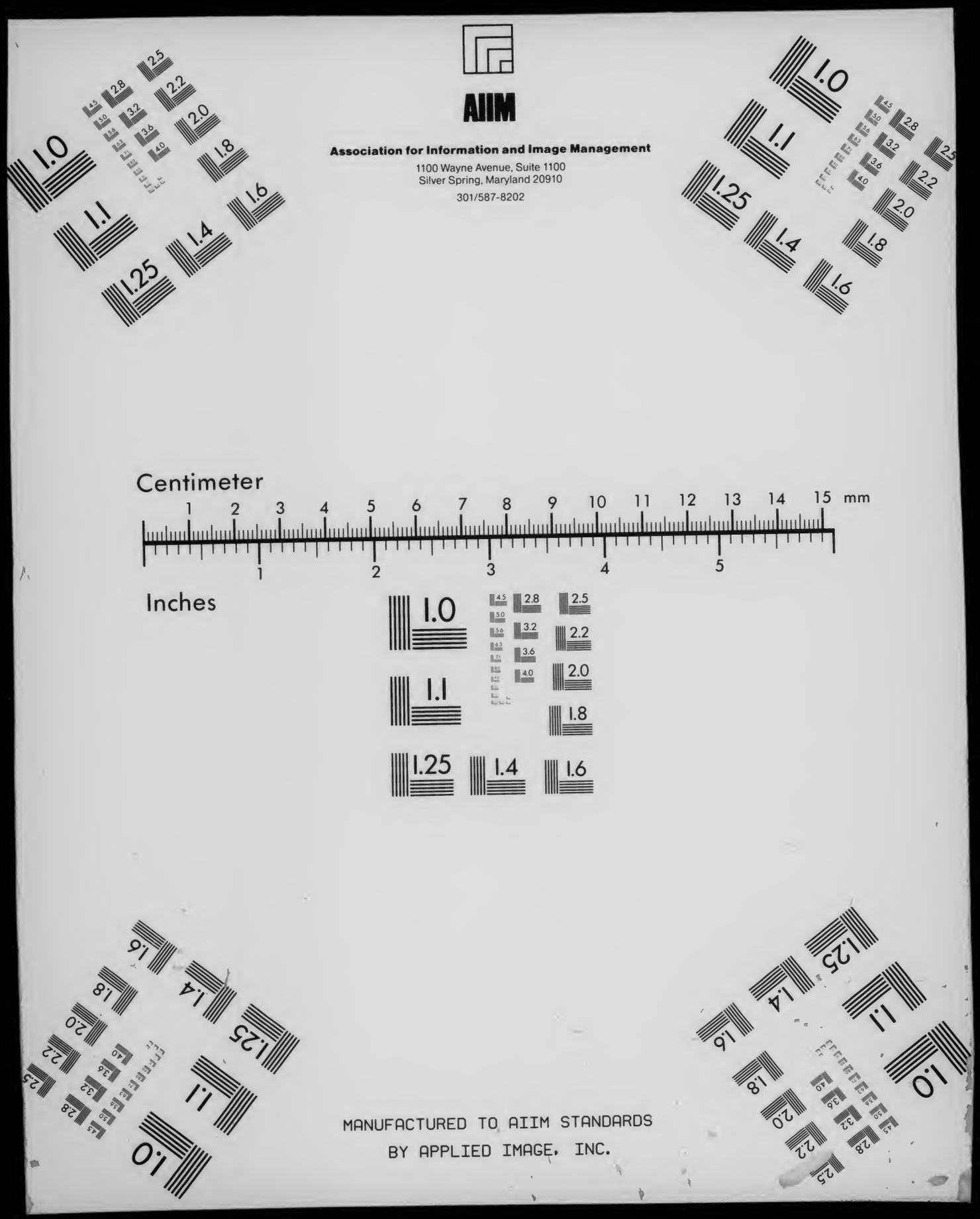
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PERSONÆ

PROLOGVS
PENICVLVS · PARASITVS
MENAECHMVS I · ADVLESCENS
MENAECHMVS II · ADVLESCENS
EROTIVM · MERETRIX
CVLINDRVS · COQVOS
MESSENIO · SERVOS
ANCILLA
MATRONA
SENEX
MEDICVS

MVTÆ· PERSONÆ

DECIO SERVOS
NAVTAE · LORARII
TIBICEN · SCAENICUS

ACTORES

STVARTIVS · SAVNDERS
GEORGIVS · MC · MILLAN
PHILIPPVS · IESSVP
LVDOVICVS · BAVMER
FREDERICVS · YEANDLE
IACOBVS · MARSHALL
GVLIELMVS · CALKINS
OLIVERIVS · HVTCHINSON
HAROLDVS · DODGE
ERNESTVS · GRIFFITH
IOANNES · TALLMADGE

PAVLVS · HASBROVCK

GVLIELMVS · IONES

PLAVTI MENAECHMI

ARGVMENTVM

Merchant of Sicily, the father was;
Entwined about his heart were dear twin sons.
Naught served him, when the one was stol'n, but death.
Adopted by his grandsire, the other twin
Eke grandsire's wealth and brother's name receives,
Conducts, when grown, a world-wide search to find
His brother, and to Epidamnus comes.
Menaechmus here, the twin, resides, and thus
Ensues confusion great, from name and face
Identical, but last the riddle's solved.

THE MENAECHMI

THE ORIGINAL OF SHAKESPEARE'S "COMEDY OF ERRORS"

"A pleasant and fine Conceited Comaedie by the most excellent wittie Poet *PLAUTUS*."

Presented in Latin, under the Auspices of the Latin Club of Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, by Members of the Club, on the Campus, Friday, June 16, 1916, at eight p. m.

THE LATIN CLUB

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J. M. Campbell	H. R. Hastings	S. S. Saunders
C. K. Chase	W. R. Higgins	J. A. Tallmadge
	F. G. Yeandle	

The Delphic Hymn to Apollo is from the Reynach transcription of the original Greek music, and is sung by Mr. H. R. Hastings.

The incidental music used to accompany the *cantica* is an arrangement scored for flute and two clarionettes, from the Frederic DeForest Allen *Phormio* music. Grateful acknowledgement of the indebtedness is here made.

The translations found in this libretto are, with the exception of the prologue, from the free English rendering of the *Menaechmi*, published in 1595, of which the Elizabethan minor poet, William Warner, is supposed to be the author.

If the weather prevents the use of the out-door theatre, the performance will be given in the Gymnasium. No charge is made for admission.

THE MENAECHMI

A play of Plautus in five acts

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PROLOGUS

PENICULUS..... ..... A parasite, hanger-on of Menaechmus I

MENAECHMUS I .....A citizen of Epidamnus } Twin

MENAECHMUS II (Sosicles)..... . A citizen of Syracuse } Brothers

EROTIUM ....A woman of Epidamnus, loved by Menaechmus I

CYLINDRUS..... ....A cook, servant of Erotium

MESSENIO ....Slave of Menaechmus II

ANCILLA..... .... Maid of Erotium

MATRONA..... .....Wife of Menaechmus I

SENEX..... .... Her father

MEDICUS..... ..... Her father's physician

Sailors and Slaves.

SCENE.—A street in Epidamnus, a Greek city in Illyria, leading on the (players') right to the harbor, and on the left to the centre of the city. In the background are the houses of Menaechmus I and Erotium.

TIME.—Near the close of the 3rd Century B. C.

THE PROLOGUE

GOOD health first of all I wish to us all here present at this play. I bring you Plautus, not on the hand but on the tongue: whom I beg you to receive with gracious attention. Now hear the plot, and give careful ear, which I will set forth as briefly as I may. Note a habit of the poets in their comedies; they place the scene of all their events in Athens, to make you think it all the more truly Greek: I will never say so when it is the fact. Greek this story is indeed, but not Attic; it is Sicilian. So much by way of preface to my plot; and now for the plot itself, measured not by the bushel or the peck but by the whole barn; see how generous is my measure in telling this tale.

There was a merchant at Syracuse, an old man, who had two twin sons, boys so much alike that the nurse who fostered them could not tell which was which, nay not their own mother who bore them: at least so I have been told by one who saw them. I have not seen them myself, pray do not

think so. When the boys were seven years old, the father freighted a large ship with merchandise ; one of the twins he took aboard and sailed away with him to Sicily on trading bent ; the other he left at home with the mother. When he came to Tarentum, it happened that there were games afoot : a crowd of visitors, as usual when there are games ; the boy went astray from his father among the crowd. A merchant of Epidamnum who happened to be there, carried off the boy to Epidamnum. The boy thus gone, his father lost heart, and before many days had past he died of that distress at Tarentum. Now when the news came to the child's grandfather at Syracuse, that one of the twins had been lost and the father was dead in Tarentum, the grandfather changed the name of the other twin, and called him by the same name as the lost one ; so dearly did he love the child that was lost. To make all clear, I say once again, that both the twins had the same name.

Now I must post it again to Epidamnum, that I may tell you the whole tale to a T. If any of you gentlemen has any commission for Epidamnum, let him now declare it boldly, not forgetting to provide the wherewithal. Pay your money, or you'll waste your pains ; but if you do pay, you'll waste more. The Epidamian of whom I spoke lately, the man that stole the child, had no children but only wealth : he adopts the child for his own, gives him a wife with a dower, and makes him his heir when he died. The lad had all his great fortune, and here he lives, the stolen twin. Now the other twin, who lives in Syracuse, has come this day to Epidamnum with his slave, to look for this twin brother of his. This is Epidamnum city while our play goes on ; when another play shall be acted this stage will be another place, just as the companies of actors often change.

I go. Farewell, ye men of Hamilton !
And thou our Jove, our Stryker, guardian, Prex,
Whose strong arm strikes untiring blows, farewell.
E'en ye professors, great and boastful ones,
Ever the foe of youth and jollity,
For once, with fair, unbiased minds, pray judge.
But most of all, fare *ye* well, lusty youths,
High honor studes, and lend this play y'r ears.

ACT I

Scene 1

Enter Peniculus, a parasite

Pen. Peniculus was given me for my name when I was young, because like a broom I swept all clean away, wheresoe'er I become—namely, all the victuals which are set before me. Now in my judgment, men that clap iron bolts on such captives as they would keep safe, and tie those servants in chains, who they think will run away, they commit an exceeding great folly. If ye would keep a man without all suspicion of running away from ye, the surest way is to tie him with meat, drink, and ease : let him ever be idle, eat his belly full, and carouse while his skin will hold, and he shall never, I warrant ye, stir a foot. These strings to tie one by the teeth, pass all the bands of iron, steel, or what metal soever, for the more slack and easy ye make them, the faster still they tie the party which is in them. I speak this upon experience of myself, who am now going for Menæchmus, there willingly to be tied to his good cheer : he is commonly so exceeding bountiful and liberal in his fare, as no marvel though such guests as myself be drawn to his table, and tied there in his dishes Now because I have lately been a stranger there, I mean to visit him at dinner : for my stomach methinks even thrusts me into the fetters of his dainty fare. But yonder I see his door open, and himself ready to come forth. [*Stands aside.*]

Scene 2

Menaechmus I, Peniculus

Menaechmus enters, talking back to his wife within, while Peniculus stands to one side unobserved. The opening lines of the scene follow.

Men. If ye were not such a brabbling fool and madbrain scold as ye are, ye would never thus cross your husband in all his actions.—'Tis no matter, serve me thus once more, and I'll send ye home to your dad with a vengeance. I can never go forth o'doors, but ye ask me whither I go ? what I do ? what business ? what I fetch ? what I carry ? as though ye were a Constable or a Toll-gatherer. I have pampered ye too much : ye have servants, wool, flax, and all things necessary to busy ye withall, yet ye watch and wonder whither I go. Well, sith it is so, ye shall now have some cause : I mean to dine this day abroad with a sweet friend of mine.

Pen. [*aside*] Yea, marry, now comes he to the point that pricks me ; this last speech galls me as much as it would do his wife. If he dine not at home, I am dressed.

Men. Would every man could tame his shrew as well as I do mine. I have now filched away a fine riding cloak of my wife's, which I mean to bestow upon one that I love better. Nay, if she be so wary and watchful over me, I count it an alms-deed to deceive her.

Pen. [*coming forward*] Come, what share have I in that same ?

Men. Out, alas, I am taken !

Pen. True, but by your friend.

Men. What, mine own Peniculus ?

Pen. Yours i'faith, body and goods, if I had any.

Menaechmus shows to Peniculus the cloak he has stolen from his wife, to give to Erotium. Peniculus refuses to be greatly interested until he learns where they will dine; Menaechmus tells him, after a cautious and amusing retreat from his own door. They are still discussing the luncheon which Menaechmus is to order for them both at Erotium's house, when the latter enters.

Scene 3

Erotium, Peniculus, Menaechmus I

Menaechmus presents the stolen cloak to Erotium and discusses the menu of the luncheon in detail. He promises to return from the Forum with Peniculus when there has been time to market, and to cook the necessary food.

Scene 4

Erotium, Cylindrus

The cook is given instructions about the marketing. He says he will have to provide for ten instead of three, since Peniculus " easily does duty for eight persons."

ACT II

Scene 1

Menæchmus II, Messenio

Menæchmus of Syracuse enters from the harbor road, with his faithful body-servant Messenio, and with sailors carrying the baggage. Messenio protests against further travels, declaring their funds to be dangerously low, as a result of six years of search throughout the Mediterranean cities for the twin brother of Menæchmus, who had disappeared when a child. Menæchmus replies that he will never stop until he has either found his brother or learned definitely of his death. The servant then urges that at least they leave Epidamnus as soon as possible, on the ground of its being an expensive and dangerous place. " For this," he says, " assure yourself, this town Epidamnus is a place of outrageous expenses, exceeding in all riot and lasciviousness : and, I hear, as full of ribalds, parasites, drunkards, catchpoles, conycatchers, and sycophants, as it can hold. Then for courtesans, why here's the currentest stamp of them in the world. Ye must not think here to

scape with as light cost as in other places. The very name shows the nature, no man comes hither *sine damno.*" Menæchmus' answer is the safeguarding of his money by taking back his purse from Messenio.

Scene 2

Cylindrus, Menæchmus II, Messenio

The comedy of errors begins when Cylindrus, the cook, enters and accosts the wrong Menæchmus.

Cyl. I have tickling gear here i' faith for their dinners. It grieves me to the heart to think how that cormorant knave Peniculus must have his share in these dainty morsels. But what ? Is Menaechmus come already, before I could come from the market ? Menaechmus, how do ye, sir ? How haps it ye come so soon ?

Men. God a mercy, my good friend, dost thou know me ?

Cyl. Know ye ? no, not I. Where's mouldychaps that must dine with ye ? A murrain on his manners.

Men. Whom meanest thou, good fellow ?

Cyl. Why Peniculus' worship, that whorson lick-trencher, your parasitical attendant.

Men. What Peniculus ? what attendant ? my attendant ? Surely this fellow is mad.

Mess [*to* Men.] Did I not tell ye what cony-catching villains you should find here ?

Cyl. Menæchmus, hark ye, sir, ye come too soon back again to dinner ; I am but returned from the market.

Men. Fellow, here, thou shalt have money of me, go get the priest to sacrifice for thee. I know thou art mad, else thou wouldst never use a stranger thus.

Cyl. Alas, sir, Cylindrus was wont to be no stranger to you. Know ye not Cylindrus ?

Men. Cylindrus, or Coliendrus, or what the devil thou art, I know not, neither do I care to know.

Cyl. I know you to be Menæchmus.

Men. Thou shouldst be in thy wits, in that thou namest me so right ; but tell me, where hast thou known me ?

Cyl. Where ? Even here, where ye first fell in love with my mistress Erotium.

Men. I neither have lover, neither know I who thou art.

Cyl. Know ye not who I am, who fills your cup and dresses your meat at our house ?

Mess. What a slave is this ! that I had somewhat to break the rascal's pate withal.

Men. At your house, when as I never came in Epidamnum till this day ?

Cyl. Oh, that's true ! Do ye not dwell in yonder house ?

Men. Foul shame light upon them that dwell there, for my part.

Cyl. Questionless, he is mad indeed, to curse himself thus.

Menæchmus is mystified, Messenio feels justified, while the cook, believing Menæchmus to be joking, tells him not to go far away, as luncheon will soon be ready. He then goes into the house to report to Erotium.

Scene 3

Erotium, Menæchmus II, Messenio

The confusion increases with the entry of Erotium, who, after calling back instructions to her maid, unsuspectingly accosts the unknown Menæchmus and tells him his luncheon is ready. In spite of Menæchmus' denials, she endeavors to prove to him that she does know him. She reminds him of his order for the meal for Peniculus and himself, of his gift of the cloak, and she even correctly states his pedigree. Eventually, however, in spite of the protests and warnings of his servant, Menæchmus decides that it is foolish to throw away such a chance for a free dinner, and tells Erotium that he had refused to recognize her only from fear lest Messenio inform his wife of what he has done. He promises that he will take the newly presented cloak to the embroiderers and have it retrimmed for her. Before entering her house he instructs Messenio to leave the sailors and the baggage at a tavern and to return for him before sunset.

Scene 4

Peniculus

Pen. Thirty years, I think, and more, have I played the knave, yet never played I the foolish knave as I have done this morning. I follow Menæchmus, and he goes to the Hall where now the Sessions are holden ; there thrusting ourselves into the press of people, when I was in midst of all the throng, he gave me the slip, that I could never more set eye on him, and I dare swear, came directly to dinner. That I would he that first devised these Sessions were hanged, and all that ever came of him, 'tis such a hindrance to men that have belly businesses in hand. Men that have nothing else to do, that do neither bid any man, nor are themselves bidden to dinner, such should come to Sessions, not we that have these matters to look to. If it were so, I had not thus lost my dinner this day ; which I think in my conscience he did even purposely cozen me of. Yet I mean to go see. If I can but light upon the reversion, I may perhaps get my penny-worths. But how now? Is this Menæchmus coming away from thence ? Dinner done, and all despatched ? What execrable luck have I !

Scene 5

Menæchmus II, Peniculus

Menæchmus (of Syracuse) entering from Erotium's house, calls back to her that he will see to the remodeling of her cloak. The wreath on his head shows that he has been dining ; he boasts that he has dined exceeding well, without cost, and has acquired a fine cloak in addition. Peniculus, incensed beyond the point of endurance by what he considers the perfidy of his patron, upbraids him for having given him the slip at the Forum, while he secretly consumed the meal. The upshot of the violent charges and equally violent denials is that Peniculus rushes into the house of Menæchmus I to inform the latter's wife of his scandalous actions.

Scene 6

Ancilla, Menæchmus II

Erotium's maid brings a bracelet to Menæchmus with a request from Erotium to have it made over at the goldsmith's. Ready to accept all that he can get, he promises compliance. The maid then begs of him the gift of a pair of pendant earrings for herself. As she will not furnish the gold, he refuses. As soon as he is alone, he thinks it high time to leave with his booty (the cloak and bracelet). Before going off toward the harbor (on the right) he throws his chaplet down the street in the opposite direction, lest he be tracked.

ACT III

Scene 1

Matrona, Peniculus

[In order to be revenged for the supposed perfidy of Menaechmus, Peniculus has reported to Menaechmus' wife the theft of the mantle; they enter together.]

Ma. Thinks he I will be made such a sot, and to be still his drudge, while he prowls and purloins all that I have, to give his trulls ?

Pen. Nay, hold your peace, we'll catch him in the nick. This way he came, in his garland forsooth, bearing the cloak to the dyers. And see, I pray, where the garland lies ; this way he is gone. See, see, where he comes again now without the cloak.

Ma. What shall I now do ?

Pen. What ? That which ye ever do ; bait him for life.

Ma. Surely I think it best so.

Pen. Stay, we will stand aside a little ; ye shall catch him unawares.

Scene 2

Menaechmus I, Matrona, Peniculus

Menaechmus has been detained, sorely against his will, by the law-suit of a client at the Forum. He curses the whole system of clients and patrons, and expresses the fear that Erotium will be angry with him for delaying luncheon.

The sight of his wife and Peniculus, just as he is about to enter Erotium's house, covers him with confusion. Observing her anger, Menaechmus attempts to soothe her, and asks the cause of her displeasure. At one time she refuses to answer his questions, and, at another, upbraids him bitterly. In this she is encouraged by Peniculus, who does some chiding on his own account. Menaechmus of course denies having lunched without his parasite, declaring he is but now returned from the Forum; but Peniculus, with the vision of the other Menaechmus in his mind, fails to be convinced. Menaechmus is forced reluctantly to admit the giving of the cloak to Erotium, but declares it only a loan. His wife grimly tells him he need never return home without it, and re-enters her house. Peniculus, having now secured nothing from either wife or husband, goes in disgust to the Forum to hunt a dinner elsewhere. Left alone, Menaechmus plans to get the cloak back from Erotium by the promise of a new and better one; he knocks at the door of her house.

Scene 3

Erotium, Menaechmus I

Erotium, surprised at seeing him standing there, politely invites him to enter. He declines, but requests the return of the cloak, since his wife has discovered the theft; he promises a substitute. Bewildered, she reminds him that he took the cloak, but shortly before, to the embroiderers. Mutual recriminations ensue, especially heated on her part. At the last she accuses him of ungentlemanly conduct and in high dudgeon leaves him. Rejected by both his wife and Erotium, he retires disconsolate to seek advice from his friends.

ACT IV

Scene 1

Menaechmus II, Matrona

Menaechmus II returns from the harbor district, still looking for his servant Messenio. The wife of Menaechmus I, seeing him with the cloak, supposes him to be her husband returned from Erotium. She decides to "go ring a peal through both his ears for his dishonest behaviour." Menaechmus is indifferent to her shrewish abuse, at the same time that he denies her accusations. Goaded, as she feels, beyond endurance, she declares she will live with him no longer and sends a slave to call her father.

Scene 2

Senex, Matrona, Menaechmus II

The old man enters without observing, at first, his daughter and Menaechmus at the further end of the stage. He complains of the infirmities of age, which make it difficult for him to hasten; then expresses his fear that his daughter's jealous and shrewish nature has caused her again to quarrel with her husband. She approaches and acquaints him with her case against Menaechmus, his theft of cloak and bracelet, and brazen friendship for Erotium. The old man

reminds her that her temper is enough to drive any man from home. After some further discussion he attempts to cross-question his supposed son-in-law. Menaechmus finally loses his temper at the questions, which he naturally is quite unable to comprehend; he succeeds only in convincing the others that he is mad and that he should be placed in confinement. The following dialogue then takes place, in one of the most amusing scenes in the play.

Men. [*aside*] What? they say now I am mad; the best way for me is to feign myself mad indeed, so shall I be rid of them.

Ma. Look how he stares about, how he gapes!

Sen. Come away, daughter: come from him.

Men. Bacchus, Apollo, Phœbus, do ye call me to come hunt in the woods with you? I see, I hear, I come, I fly; but I cannot get out of these fields. Here is an old mastiff bitch stands barking at me; and by her stands an old goat that bears false witness against many a poor man.

Sen. Out upon him, Bedlam fool.

Ma. Here, father: what shall we do?

Sen. What if I fetch my folks hither, and have him carried in before he do any harm?

Men. [*aside*] How now? they will carry me in if I look not to myself: I were best to scare them better yet. [*Aloud*] Dost thou bid me, Phœbus, to tear this dog in pieces with my nails? If I lay hold on him, I will do thy commandment.

Sen. Get thee into thy house, daughter; away quickly.
[*Exit Ma.*]

Men. She is gone: yea, Apollo, I will sacrifice this old beast unto thee.

Sen. Come not near me, sirrah.

Men. Many things thou commandest me, Apollo; wouldst thou have me harness up these wild horses, and then climb up into the chariot, and so over-ride this old stinking toothless lion? So now I am in the chariot, and I have hold on the reins: here is my whip. Hait! come, ye wild jades, make a hideous noise with your stamping: hait, I say: will ye not go?

Sen. What? doth he threaten me with his horses?

Men. Hark! now Apollo bids me ride over him that stands there, and kill him. How now? who pulls me down from my chariot by the hairs of my head? Oh, shall I not fulfil Apollo's commandment?

Sen. See, see, what a sharp disease this is, and how well he was even now. I will fetch a physician straight, before he grow too far into this rage. *Exit.*

Men. Are they both gone now? I'll then hie me away to my ship: 'tis time to be gone from hence. *Exit.*

ACT V

Scene 1

Senex

The old man complains of the slowness of the doctor whom he has summoned.

Scene 2

Medicus, Senex

The doctor and the old man discuss the ailment of Menaechmus.

Scene 3

Menaechmns I, Senex, Medicus

Menaechmus curses his luck in having offended both his wife and Erotium, and swears vengeance on Peniculus for having betrayed him. The doctor, a pompous quack, now interviews him, prompted by the old man. He asks about his ability to sleep, the condition of his stomach, even the color of the wine he prefers. As Menaechmus' rage increases, the doctor gives an emphatic verdict for insanity. He suggests Menaechmus' taking the hellebore cure for twenty days and asks the old man to have his slaves forcibly bring him to the doctor's office for treatment. The scene ends with the following lines by Menaechmus:

Men. Are they both gone? Good gods, what meaneth this? These men say I am mad, who without doubt are mad themselves. I stir not, I fight not, I am not sick. I speak to them, I know them. Well, what were I now best to do? I would go home, but my wife shuts me forth a doors. Erotium is far out with me too. Even here I will rest me till the evening: I hope by that time, they will take pity on me. [*Seats himself apart.*]

Scene 4

Messenio, [Menaechmus I]

Messenio returns for his master. He expresses the belief that his master will soon reward his faithful service by freeing him. He knocks, and enters Erotium's house.

Scene 5

Senex, Menaechmus I, Lorarii, Messenio

The old man enters with four slaves. He points out Menaechmus and orders them to pick him up and carry him off. Then follows the boisterous fight scene. In the midst of it Messenio comes out and aids his (supposed) master; the slaves are put to flight. The servant then asks his freedom. He considers

the protestations of Menaechmus as merely a joke, and finally secures permission from Menaechmus to be free, "as far as he is concerned." Overjoyed at what he considers his master's liberality, he returns for the baggage and pocketbook. Menaechmus is pleased at the prospect of getting such a windfall and tells him to hasten. Menaechmus enters Erotium's house to make another effort to secure the cloak.

Scene 6

Menaechmus II, Messenio

Messenio has gone only a few blocks when he meets the other Menaechmus (his real master), whom he supposes to have intercepted him in jest. While the servant and the bewildered master are still talking, Menaechmus I enters from Erotium's house.

Scene 7

Menaechmus I, Messenio, Menaechmus II

In the final scene, Messenio is at first utterly at a loss to determine which is his master. The general bewilderment postpones for a few minutes the natural solution of the difficulty. Messenio is the first to recover his wits and to attempt a complete identification. The joy of the brothers is unbounded, and Messenio is given his freedom by Menaechmus II. The play ends with a noisy announcement, by Messenio, of the approaching auction of all the effects of Menaechmus I (his wife included), preparatory to the removal of Menaechmus I and Menaechmus II to the city of Syracuse. In conclusion, he requests the applause of the audience.

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